

Trump in 2016 was an example of “racist progress” in this country, and she declared that we must do everything in our collective power to realize Dr. Kendi’s vision for America.

I am concerned that, as the Federal Government’s HR director, Ms. Ahuja could use her platform to promote radical ideologies that seek to divide rather than unite people. She could bring critical race theory back into Federal Government training and to every level of Federal personnel, stronger than ever. And I am not alone in this concern. All of my Republican colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee opposed Ms. Ahuja in a vote back in April.

Two weeks ago, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association—they represent 100,000 Federal police officers that protect and defend our Nation every day—they announced that they were also concerned about Ms. Ahuja’s nomination because of her advocacy of critical theory.

I have to say, I agree with Federal law enforcement. I agree with what they said in their letter. We should nominate candidates for public office that are committed to ideological neutrality, to fairness, and to impartiality under the law. I want to be clear, I do not for a moment question Ms. Ahuja’s sincerity or integrity. In fact, I thank her for her willingness to serve the Nation; but I cannot agree with what appears to be her fundamental ideology. At the end of the day, this is not about politics or personalities; this is about ensuring that the Federal Government stands for unity, not division, harmony, not hate.

As the Reverend Dr. King famously said, and he was right, we should judge our fellow citizens by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin. We need a strong nation with strong citizens who see each other as Americans, not as oppressors or oppressed.

Now, I have heard a lot of criticism about my position here today. I have heard the corporate media and those on the left say that I misunderstand critical theory or that it is not real or that it is not a real problem. I have heard many say the United States is indeed built on oppression and remains a systematically racist place.

All I can say is that is not the America I see, that is not the America I know. The working people of this country who have rallied to this Nation’s flag in every hour of danger, who are the first to help a neighbor in need, who coach our Little Leagues and volunteer at our churches, who go to work day in and day out to provide for their families and protect the place they call home, these are not oppressors; these are liberators. These are not oppressors; these are great people. They live with a spirit of liberty that has made this country the greatest country in the history of the world, and they want to see that liberty extended to every member of the American family. That

is who the American people are. That is what makes them great. That is what they believe—because they are a great people. Our future is a cause for hope and not despair.

The advocates of critical theory tell us we have to dismantle our culture, our history, our families, our Jewish and Christian heritage and beliefs because they are all oppressive. They say the future of this Nation will be defined by racial division and racial strife. I reject that prophecy of our future, and I take my stand on the goodness of the American people and the God who guides us. I take my stand on hope.

It is not oppression that defines the American story. It is hope. From the minutemen at Lexington and Concord, to the pioneers who found a new life in the West, to the heroes of the Underground Railroad, to the Union soldiers at Little Round Top, to the workers who fought the old monopolies for fair pay, to the women who fought for suffrage, to the young men who twice liberated Europe, to the civil rights demonstrators likes of Bull Connor, to the firemen and police officers who rebuilt New York and gave this country confidence again in the years after 9/11, it is love for one another and love for our country that we call home that has defined our story and given us hope; and that love and that hope will define our future once again. I am confident of it.

In this Nation, we are not united by ethnic creed or race or religion—and proudly so. We are united by our shared history. We are united by what we love together. We are united by the radical belief that those who liberate others, those who practice grace and mercy, those who call forth the best in those around them, they are the ones who changed the world; and that principle, that truth, that hope, is what drives our history. And we are not done building that history yet. The greatest Nation in the history of the world is not done yet.

Critical theory in all of its guises distorts our history, it destroys our common love, and it would leave us hopelessly divided, at enmity with one another and alone. To this dark vision, we must say no. To radical hope, we must say yes.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote no on Ms. Ahuja’s nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise to support Kiran Ahuja’s nomination to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management, or OPM. Ms. Ahuja is a proven leader who has the experience and commitment needed to restore confidence in OPM and provide a vision for the future of the Federal workforce.

OPM is an independent agency that supports more than 2 million Federal employees who serve all across the government. Both OPM and the Federal workforce have faced unprecedented

challenges in recent years, from attempts to dismantle the agency, to a record-setting government shutdown, to the coronavirus pandemic. And unfortunately, these challenges were made worse due to the lack of consistent and committed leadership at OPM. Our dedicated public servants are on the frontline every day, responding to the ongoing pandemic, protecting our national security, and delivering vital services to the American people each and every day. The dedicated men and women who serve at OPM and throughout the civil service deserve a qualified, experienced leader who is committed to supporting the people who make government work.

Ms. Ahuja’s career includes over two decades of management experience, including running nonprofit organizations, leading the White House initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders during the Obama administration, and serving as Chief of Staff at OPM.

Throughout this confirmation process, Ms. Ahuja has demonstrated that she understands the mission of OPM and the experience of safeguarding the nonpartisan civil service. She has committed to working closely and transparently with Congress to strengthen and to modernize the Federal workforce.

I am confident that Ms. Ahuja is the right person to lead OPM at this pivotal time. She will provide the strategic vision and the management needed to reinvigorate the Federal workforce.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the confirmation of Kiran Ahuja for Director of OPM.

VOTE ON FONZONE NOMINATION

Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Fonzone nomination?

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 243 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Baldwin	Hassan	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blunt	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Schumer
Burr	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Cornyn	Merkley	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Ossoff	
Gillibrand	Padilla	

NAYS—45

Barrasso	Hagerty	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Shelby
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Tillis
Ernst	McConnell	Toomey
Fischer	Moran	Tuberville
Graham	Paul	Wicker
Grassley	Portman	Young

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 107, Kiran Arjandas Ahuja, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of four years.

Charles E. Schumer, Gary C. Peters, Jacky Rosen, John Hickenlooper, Tammy Baldwin, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Raphael Warnock, Martin Heinrich, Chris Van Hollen, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bernard Sanders, Jeff Merkley, Patty Murray, Margaret Hassan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that the nomination of Kiran Arjandas Ahuja, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of four years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 244 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Senate being evenly divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Kiran Arjandas Ahuja, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of four years.

RECESS

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:38 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

NOMINATION OF KIRAN ARJANDAS AHUJA

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I rise in support of Kiran Ahuja and her nomination to be the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, or the OPM. OPM needs an experienced, qualified leader who is committed to the Federal workforce and is invested in their future.

Ms. Ahuja is that leader. She understands the unique challenges facing OPM, and she has the management experience and vision needed to restore and strengthen the workforce. I am confident that Ms. Ahuja is the right person to lead OPM at this pivotal time. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the confirmation of Kiran Ahuja for Director of OPM.

VOTE ON AHUJA NOMINATION

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote scheduled to occur at 2:30 would occur immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Ahuja nomination?

Mr. PETERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

(Mr. KELLY assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. MURPHY assumed the Chair.)

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 245 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 50. The Senate being equally and evenly divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the nomination is confirmed.

The nomination was confirmed.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will immediately be notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021—MOTION TO PROCEED

The VICE PRESIDENT. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to legislative session to resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2093, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 77, S. 2093, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. is equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.